(c) In addition to Plan allocation of the State for the Irrigation Sector, Himachal Pradesh is availing of Central Loan Assistance (CLA) under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) of the Government of India for expeditious completion of selected major and medium projects and various minor irrigation schemes. Ceiling for CLA to be released to each State under AIBP is decided by the Planning Commission on year-to-year basis and funds are released on the basis of proposals received from the States.

Details of Central Loan Assistance provided to Himachal Pradesh under AIBP are as under:-

(Rs. in Crore)

Sl. No.	Name of Project	CLA released upto end of January, 2003
1.	Shah-Nahar Irrigation Project	38.024
2.	Sidhata Medium Irrigation Project	2.250
3.	Changer Lift Irrigation Project	1.015
4.	42 MI Schemes in 1999-2000	2.422
5.	60 MI Schemes in 2000-2001	4.295
	TOTAL:	48.006

Funds allocated for desilting of reservoirs

1375. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Crop Weather Watch Group which reviews water level in reservoirs has submitted report that overall water position in 70 important reservoirs of the country continues to be critical;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action initiated to rectify it;

(c) whether State Governments and Central Water Commission were directed to undertake desilting of reservoirs in view of the low level of storage; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard togetherwith the period required for desilting and fund allotted for it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) As per Crop Weather Watch Group (CWWG), the overall position in 70 important reservoirs of the country continues to be critical. The total live storage in 70 important reservoirs in different parts of the country, monitored by the Central Water Commission for the week ending 21.02.2003 was 34.56 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) (26 per cent of the storage capacity at full reservoir level) as against 46.46 BCM on the corresponding date of previous year and 58.61 BCM the average storage for the last 10 years. The storage was less than the last year's position by 11.90 BCM and less than average of last ten years storage by 24.06 BCM. Low storage in the reservoirs is mainly due to deficit monsoon during the year.

(c) and (d) Irrigation being a State subject, the responsibility of planning, investigation, funding alongwith priority, execution, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects, including irrigation and flood control primarily rests with the concerned State Governments themselves. Hence, the Central Government has not issued any direction for desilting of reservoirs.

Seeking the US expertise for inter-linking of rivers

1376. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India can emulate Texas, which had an agreement with Mexico for sharing water as a flood control programme, by linking up its major rivers;

(b) whether Government propose to seek the US expertise to help India in the gigantic task of linking its major rivers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) The project of linking of major rivers under National Perspective Plan (NPP) being studied by NWDA is a mega project in view of unprecedented size of the scheme and complexity of water transfer involved. The scheme can draw on experience of the Texas plan in terms of proposed quantum of water transfer and network of canals across the length and breadth of the country,